**The BEE: Early Literacy and Movement for Young Blind Children**

**NFB Braille Reading Pals Club & NFB Early Explorers**

**November, 2016**

**What’s Buzzing with the National Federation of the Blind?**

**The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back.**

**The message above is the core belief of the National Federation of the Blind. There are many organizations out there that claim to have the best interests of blind people as their mission, but don’t believe in this message.**

**Just last month, members of the NFB fought back against the Foundation Fighting Blindness’ (FFB) #HowEyeSeeIt Campaign. It is not that the NFB opposes the FFB or their research for a cure for retina based eye conditions. However, we do NOT agree with their fear based tactics. Asking people to wear a blindfold and attempt to do everyday tasks, record themselves fumbling through those tasks, and sharing it across social media using the #HowEyeSeeIt hashtag, does NOT help blind people. Instead, these videos perpetuate the fear associated with blindness. Many members fought back with their own videos, blogs, tweets, and Facebook posts.**

**As a blind person, a blind parent, and a parent of a blind child, every day I work to raise the low expectations about blindness. Every day I reject that blindness is something to fear. I understand that the initial diagnosis that your child is blind, may eventually go blind, or has to venture through life with low vision is scary. With the resources, support, and love of the National Federation of the Blind family behind you, you and your child have nothing to fear.**

**Literacy Hints from the Hive**

**As we raise our children to be caring and loving little people, we often tell them that sharing is caring. Here, I would like to share with you a few wonderful places to access Braille books for blind children. As aunts, uncles, and grandparents ask for ideas on what to get your child for Christmas, share with them these resources so that they can help give the gift of literacy to your blind child.**

**American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults:** [**www.actionfund.org**](http://www.actionfund.org)

**Beulah Reimer Legacy:** [**www.beulahreimerlegacy.com**](http://www.beulahreimerlegacy.com)

**Bookshare:** [**www.bookshare.org**](http://www.bookshare.org)

**Braille Institute:** [**www.brailleinstitute.org**](http://www.brailleinstitute.org)

**Braille Tales:** [**www.aph.org**](http://www.aph.org)

**Future Aids: The Braille Superstore:** [**www.braillebookstore.com**](http://www.braillebookstore.com)

**National Braille Press:** [**www.nbp.org**](http://www.nbp.org)

**National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS):** [**https://www.loc.gov/nls/**](https://www.loc.gov/nls/)

**Seedlings:** [**www.seedlings.org**](http://www.seedlings.org)

**Temple Beth El Braille Bindery:** [**www.tbeonline.org**](http://www.tbeonline.org)

**Travel Tales**

**You have probably noticed that there are a few different types of canes one can use. You have probably wondered why the NFB uses the long white cane instead of the shorter folding cane. If you are a parent of a very young blind child, you have probably asked yourself when I should introduce my child to a cane.**

**I am not a certified orientation and mobility instructor. However, I am a cane user, and this is what I usually tell people when asked these questions.**

**I have used both the shorter folding cane and long white cane. As someone who likes to walk fast, I like to use a longer cane. As someone who wants to have confidence in my steps, I choose the long white cane with its metal tip. The metal tip gives me echo location feedback of my surroundings. As someone who likes to feel the sunshine on my face, I choose this long white cane so I can stand up straighter and keep my head held high, instead of looking down for what might come next in my path.**

**For those parents of young blind children wondering when it is appropriate to introduce your child to their first cane, I say, “YESTERDAY.” It’s never too early for a child to explore his/her environment with a long white cane. You can get a free long white cane through the NFB’s Free White Cane Program at** [**https://nfb.org/free-cane-program**](https://nfb.org/free-cane-program)**.**

**A Taste of Honey**

**This holiday season as we gather with our loved ones around many meals, let us give gratitude for the National Federation of the Blind and our belief that our blind children can and will live the lives they want. Let us start by allowing them to be part of the celebrations by inviting them to set the table, pass the bread, and share in this time of Thanksgiving.**

**Here are a few things you can do to make meal time a learning moment for your child.**

1. **Have them set the table. This can be for the simple family dinner, or even those larger family gatherings with grandma and grandpa. For those ambitious children where setting the table might be a quick task, ask them to fill the water glasses too.**
2. **When passing the bread, take an extra moment to let your child take the basket from you, select his/her own roll, and pass the basket to the next family member. All too often food appears on a child’s plate without him or her playing any part of selecting what gets placed there.**
3. **Spreading and savoring the butter on the bread. Your blind child will not always be a blind child. Your blind child will grow up to be a confident blind adult hosting their own holiday parties. This starts with the simple task of independently buttering that yummy roll they’ve just selected from the bread basket. It’s much easier if the butter is warmed to room temperature. Show your child how to hold the bread with one hand, the knife with the other, and spread from the middle towards the edge.**

**Happy Holidays from our table to yours!**

**Buzzes and Tweets**

Follow [@NFB\_Voice](https://nfb.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=3730&qid=568205) on Twitter to get news and information from the NFB.

Follow [@BrailleLiteracy](https://nfb.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=3731&qid=568205) on Twitter to get timely Braille news, information, and tips.

Like the National Federation of the Blind on Facebook to stay current with all of the new things happening at the NFB Jernigan Institute.

**Books for Busy Bees**

If you are looking to grow your child’s Braille library, check out the [Braille storybook resources webpage](https://nfb.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=3733&qid=568205) for information on free books, lending libraries, and Braille book retailers.

[The NFB Braille Reading Pals Club](https://nfb.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=3734&qid=568205) and [NFB Early Explorers](https://nfb.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=3735&qid=568205) programs are sponsored in part by the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children and the American Action Fund for Blind Children and Adults. For more information please contact:

Community Relations  
NFB Jernigan Institute  
200 East Wells Street  
Baltimore, MD 21230  
Phone: (410) 659-9314, extension 2287  
Fax: (410) 659-5129  
Email: [BrailleReadingPals@nfb.org](mailto:braillereadingpals@nfb.org) or [EarlyExplorers@nfb.org](mailto:earlyexplorers@nfb.org)

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200 East Wells Street  
at Jernigan Place  
Baltimore, MD 21230  
United States